Policy Analysis: Poli. 338
Spring 2014

Robert Stein
Herzstein 201

Tue/Thurs: 9:25-10:40
Sewall 306

Required texts:

Shahidur R. Khandker, Gayatri B. Koolwal and Hussain A. Samad, *Handbook on Impact Evaluation*, World Bank (Available as a free *ebook* at http://www.stata.com/bookstore/hoie.html)

David L. Weimer and Aidan R. Vining, *Policy Analysis* 4th or 5th editions

* Readings available at course owlspace site

Course requirements:

Midterm examination:	100 points
Two written assignments:	200 points
Final written assignment:	100 points

This course provides a survey of how public policy is made, evaluated (judged) and ultimately changed. The first half of the course will review the institutions, processes, groups and actors that shape, make, implement and evaluate public policies at different levels of government (local, state and national). The second half of the course covers methods and designs for evaluating public policy.

Syllabus:

January 14, 16, 21, 23, 28, 30

Topics:

Rationales for Public Policy
Limits to Public Intervention
Market failure and its correction
A systems (biological) model of public policy

Readings:

Weimer and Vining, ch. 2, 4-7
*Bryan Jones and Frank Baumgartner. 2012. "From there to here: Punctuated Equilibrium to the General Punctuation Thesis to a Theory of Government Information Processing," *The Policy Studies Journal* 40(1,2012):1-1.
*Max Rose and Frank R. Baumgartner. 2013. "Framing the Poor: Media Coverage and U.S. Poverty Policy, 1960-2008." *Policy Studies Journal* 41(1, 2013):22-53.

February 4, 6, 11, 13, 25

Topics:

Alternative solutions to policy and market failures
Systematic thinking about evaluating policy
Designing effective policy evaluation
Basic Issues of Evaluation

Readings:

Weimer and Vining, Chapters, 8-13
*"What is Research Design?"
*"Steps for Successful Policy Analysis"
Khandker et al, Chapter 2: Basic Issues of Evaluation

[Midterm examination February 27]
SPRING BREAK MARCH 4-6

March 11, 13, 18, 20, 25, 27

Topics:

Randomization
Propensity Score Matching
Double Difference
Instrumental Variables
Regression Discontinuity

Readings:

Khandker, Chapters 3-7
*Imai, Kosuke, Luke Keele, Dustin Tingley, and Teppei Yamamoto. 2011. "Unpacking the Black Box of Causality: Learning about Causal Mechanisms from Experimental and Observational Studies." *American Political Science Review* 105 (4): 765-789.
*Stein, Robert & Greg Vonnahme. 2008. "Engaging the Unengaged Voter: Vote Centers and Voter Turnout." *The Journal of Politics* 70 (2): 487–497
*Campbell, Donald T. and H. Laurence Ross. 1968. "The Connecticut Crackdown on Speeding: Time Series Data in Quasi-Experimental Analysis." *Law and Society Review* 3 (August): 33-53.
*Kam, Cindy D and Carl L. Palmer. 2008. "Reconsidering the Effects of Education on Political Participation." *The Journal of Politic*s 70 (3): 612-63.
*Green, Donald P. and Daniel Winik. "Estimating the Effects of Incarceration and Probation on Recidivism among Drug Offenders." In 2010. *Criminology*. 48(2): 357-387.
*David Card and Alan B. Krueger. 1994. "Minimum Wages and Employment: A Case Study of the Fast-Food Industry in New Jersey and Pennsylvania." *American Economic Review* 84:772-

[First written paper due April 3]
MIDTERM RECESS APRIL 3-4

April 1, 8, 10, 15, 17, 22, 24

Topics:

Red light cameras
Houston's *Safeclear* program
Houston Public Libraries
Preparing and responding to Hurricanes
Household Weatherization Programs
Weekend run-off elections
Photographic voter ID laws
Immigration

Readings:

*Troy Walden, "Evaluation of Photographic Traffic Signal Enforcement Systems in Texas." June 2011.
*Robert Erikson and Lorraine C. Minnite. 2009. "Modeling Problems in the Voter Identification-Voter Turnout Debate." *Election Law Journal*.8:85-101.
*Robert Stein, et al. 2013. "The efficacy of preparing for natural disasters."
*Solon Ardittis and Frank Laczko. 2008. "How are the costs and impacts of migration policies evaluated?"
*Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory, 2010. *Driving Demand for Home Energy Improvements.*
*Robert Stein. 2013. *How Customers Use Public Libraries.*
**Weekend runoff Elections.*
**SafeClear Performance Metrics 2008*

[Second written assignment due April 15]
[Final written assignment due Last Day of Exams]